

News release

15 June 2011

Seafish back on board after positive Supreme Court ruling

Seafish, the authority on seafood, will be back serving the seafood industry at full capacity after the Supreme Court today handed down its judgment in favour of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Court ruled that Seafish levy collection from imported sea fish and sea fish products is legal and always has been legal.

Dr Paul Williams, Chief Executive of Seafish, says:

“We are delighted with the Supreme Court’s ruling. The fact that the highest court in the UK has confirmed our powers to raise a levy on imported sea fish and sea fish products means we can now move forward and carry out our planned activities. The ruling will have a positive impact on Seafish and the entire seafood industry.

“The earlier Court of Appeal decision, in March 2010, resulted in a significant loss of income to Seafish, which impacted on projects and services in all areas of our organisation – distracting us from our important work.

“We are now very pleased to be able to return with force to our job - adding value to the seafood industry throughout the supply chain.”

Seafish looks forward to working with the industry to move forward with activities covering priority issues, such as: safety; environment; regulation; standards; consumers; and health.

To enable Seafish to carry out future activities, back-dated levy will be collected from businesses that have not paid levy on imported sea fish and sea fish products. Seafish will be in touch with the relevant businesses to discuss payment of this levy.

Dr Williams said: “We have remained in touch with the businesses that have been affected by the court rulings, so we expect to be able to progress swiftly back to working at full capacity with our funding reinstated.”

John Whitehead, the Seafish Chairman, said: “I would like to thank Paul Williams and all the staff at Seafish for their commitment during the past 16 months of uncertainty. This has been a very difficult time for all of them and the Seafish Board is appreciative of their dedication.”

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Notes to editor:

- 1) Seafish, the authority on seafood, was founded in 1981 by an Act of Parliament and supports the seafood industry for a sustainable, profitable future. Our services range from research and development, economic consulting, market research and training and accreditation through to account management and legislative advice for the seafood industry.